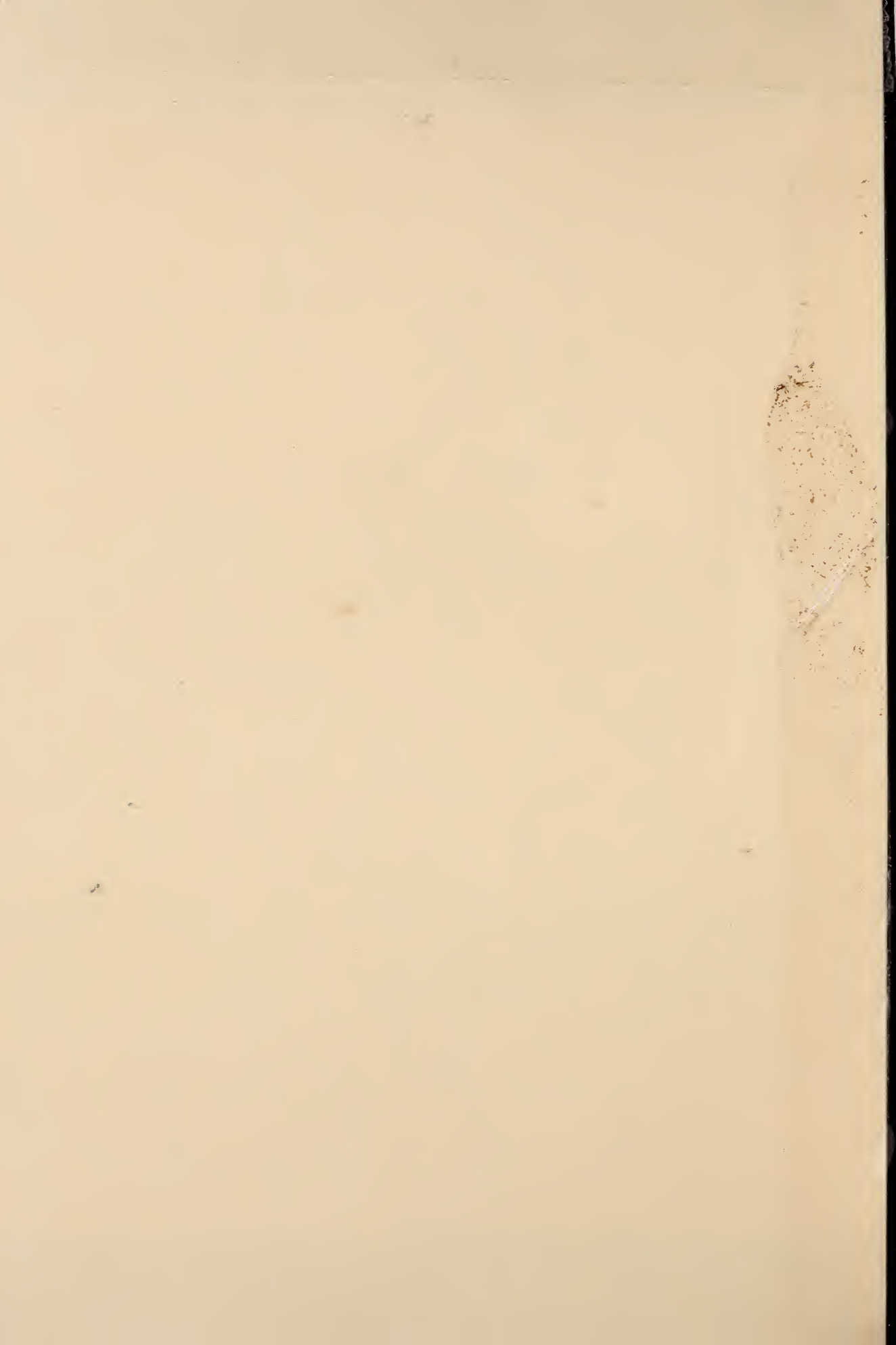


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United States Department of Agriculture

2 U.S. PRODUCTION AND MARKETING ADMINISTRATION

SERVICE AND REGULATORY ANNOUNCEMENTS NO. 114

OFFICIAL UNITED STATES STANDARDS FOR GRADES OF VEAL AND CALF CARCASSES

(Title 7, Ch. I, Pt. 53, Sections 53.107-53.111 of the
Code of Federal Regulations)

The following is a reprint of the official United States standards for the grades of veal and calf carcasses heretofore promulgated by the Secretary of Agriculture under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (60 Stat. 1087; 7 U. S. C. 1621 et seq.) and the item for Market Inspection of Farm Products and Marketing Farm Products recurring in the annual appropriation acts for the Department of Agriculture. The standards are reprinted with amendments effective March 10, 1951.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STANDARDS

The official standards for grades of veal and calf carcasses were initially promulgated on July 12, 1928. The standards were amended in October 1940 (Amendment No. 1 to S. R. A. 114) by changing the grade designations Medium and Common to Commercial and Utility, respectively. Beginning September 18, 1942, pursuant to Amendment 5, Maximum Price Regulation 169 of the Office of Price Administration, the use of the grade specified as Prime was suspended (Amendment No. 2 to S. R. A. 114); however, its use was restored as an official grade on December 3, 1946 (Amendment No. 3 to S. R. A. 114). During that period all veal and calf carcasses that met the specifications of the Prime grade were identified with and graded as Choice.

In March 1951, the official standards were amended (Amendment No. 4 to S. R. A. 114) by combining the Prime and Choice grades and designating them as Prime, renaming the Good grade as Choice, and dividing the Commercial grade into two grades and designating that segment included in the top half of the grade as Good while retaining the Commercial grade designation for the remaining portion of the grade. The Utility and Cull grade specifications were not changed. This same amendment also provided for reflecting the minimum requirements for each grade, and also clarified the method for differentiating between veal and calf.

DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN VEAL AND CALF CARCASSES

Differentiation between veal and calf carcasses is made primarily on the basis of the color of the lean, although factors such as texture of lean, character of fat, size, and color of the rib bones, and carcass weight are also considered. Typical veal carcasses have a grayish pink color of lean that is very smooth and velvety in texture. They also have a slightly soft, pliable character of fat and narrow, very red rib bones, and weigh less than 100 pounds. By contrast, typical calf carcasses have a distinctly reddish color of lean, a harder, flakier type of fat, and somewhat wider rib bones with less pronounced evidences of red color, and weigh more than 150 pounds.

CLASSES OF VEAL AND CALF CARCASSES

Class determination is based on the apparent sex condition of the animal at time of slaughter. Hence, there are three classes of veal and calf carcasses—steers, heifers, and bulls. While recognition may sometimes be given to these

different classes on the market, especially in the case of calf carcasses that are approaching beef in maturity, the differences between the various classes are so slight that accurate description of them is impractical. Therefore, the grade standards which follow are equally applicable to all classes of veal and calf carcasses.

APPLICATION OF STANDARDS

Veal and calf carcasses are graded on a composite evaluation of three general grade factors—conformation, finish, and quality. These factors are concerned with the proportions of the various wholesale cuts in the carcass, the proportions of fat, lean, and bone in the carcass, and the quality of the flesh. Carcasses qualifying for any particular grade may vary with respect to their relative development of the three grade factors; and there will be carcasses which qualify for a particular grade, some of whose characteristics may be more nearly typical of another grade. Because it is impractical to describe the nearly limitless numbers of such recognizable combinations of characteristics, the standards for each grade describe only carcasses which have a relatively similar development of conformation, finish, and quality and which are also representative of the lower limit of each grade.

The standards specify only one degree of fatness for each grade of veal and calf. However, this degree of fatness applies only to carcasses of average weight and maturity. In order to qualify for any particular grade, heavier, more mature carcasses are required to have a somewhat greater quantity of fat and lighter, younger carcasses somewhat less fat than that specified. Because of the greater variability in weight and maturity among calf carcasses, a somewhat greater variation in degree of fatness will be present within each grade of that class than will be present among carcasses of each grade of veal carcasses.

While color of lean is of primary importance in differentiating between veal and calf carcasses, the range of colors within the various grades is slightly different. Very young veal usually has a very light grayish pink color of lean, regardless of grade. As veal carcasses approach calf in development and maturity, the color of the lean becomes progressively more reddish. However, in the higher grades the color remains light and bright; whereas, in the lower grades the color may become progressively darker and duller. A similar variation in color is found among the various grades of calf.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR OFFICIAL UNITED STATES STANDARDS FOR GRADES OF VEAL CARCASSES

PRIME

A veal carcass possessing the minimum qualifications for Prime grade is superior in conformation, finish, and quality.

In conformation it is blocky and compact and tends to be broad in proportion to its length. It tends to be thickly fleshed and has a rather plump, full, well-rounded appearance. Rounds tend to be thick and bulging. Loin and back tend to be full and plump. Shoulders and breast tend to be thick.

There is a thin covering of fat over the rump, loin, back, top of the shoulders, and over the inner walls of the chest and abdomen. There are slightly large deposits of fat in the breast, flanks, and crotch, and around the kidneys, the latter being completely covered. All exterior fat is smooth. The flesh is rather firm, fine-textured and, in a cut surface, velvety to sight and touch. All bones are small in proportion to the size and weight of the carcass.

CHOICE

A veal carcass possessing the minimum qualifications for Choice grade is moderately blocky and compact and tends to be moderately broad in proportion to its length. It is slightly thick-fleshed and has a slightly plump appearance. Rounds are slightly thick and bulging. Loin and back tend to be moderately full and plump. Shoulders and breast are slightly thick.

There is a very thin covering of fat over the loin and back and over the inner walls of the chest and abdomen. There are slightly small deposits of fat in the breast, flanks and crotch, and around the kidneys. All exterior fat is moderately smooth. The flesh is slightly firm and fine textured, and may be slightly moist to sight and touch. All bones are moderately small in proportion to the size and weight of the carcass.

GOOD

A veal carcass possessing the minimum qualifications for the Good grade tends to be slightly blocky and compact and tends to be slightly broad in proportion to its length. It tends to be slightly thin-fleshed and has little or no evidence of plumpness. Loin, back, and rounds are slightly thin and nearly flat. Shoulders and breast tend to be slightly thin.

There are very thin patches of fat over the loin and back and over the inner walls of the chest and abdomen. There are small deposits of fat in the breast, flanks, and crotch and around the kidneys. The flesh is moderately soft, and, in a cut surface, slightly moist to sight and touch. All bones are slightly large in proportion to the size and weight of the carcass.

COMMERCIAL

A veal carcass possessing the minimum qualifications for the Commercial grade is rough and rangy and is narrow in proportion to its length. It is thinly fleshed and has an empty, sunken, or hollowed-out appearance. Rounds are thin and tapering and slightly concave. Loin and back are depressed. Shoulders and breast are narrow and thin.

There are extremely thin patches of fat over the back and loin and over a portion of the inner walls of the chest and abdomen. There are very small deposits of fat in the breast, flanks, and crotch and around the kidneys, the latter being incompletely covered. The flesh is soft, and, in a cut surface, moist to the touch. All bones are moderately large in proportion to the size and weight of the carcass.

UTILITY

A veal carcass possessing the minimum qualifications for the Utility grade is very rough and rangy and very narrow in proportion to its length. It is very thinly fleshed and has a very depressed or hollowed-out appearance. Rounds are very thin and tapering and moderately concave. Loin and back are very shallow and depressed. Shoulders and breast are very narrow and thin.

There is no fat covering over the back, loin, or inner walls of the chest and abdomen. There are extremely small deposits of fat in the breast, flanks, and crotch, and around the kidneys. The flesh is very soft, and, in a cut surface, very moist to the touch. All bones are large in proportion to the size and weight of the carcass.

CULL

A typical Cull grade veal carcass is extremely rough and rangy and extremely narrow in proportion to its length. It is extremely deficient in fleshing and has an extremely shallow, depressed, or hollowed-out appearance. Rounds are concave and extremely thin and tapering. Loin and back are extremely depressed. Shoulders and breast are extremely narrow and thin.

There is no fat covering over any part of the exterior of the carcass and none on the inner walls of the chest and abdomen. There are no discernible fat deposits in the breast, flanks, or crotch, and only extremely small quantities around the kidneys. The flesh is very soft and watery. All bones are very large in proportion to the size and weight of the carcass.

SPECIFICATIONS FOR OFFICIAL UNITED STATES STANDARDS FOR GRADES OF CALF CARCASSES

PRIME

A calf carcass possessing the minimum qualifications for the Prime grade is superior in conformation, finish, and quality.

In conformation, it is blocky and compact and tends to be broad in proportion to its length. It is thickly fleshed and has a plump, full, well-rounded appearance. Rounds tend to be thick and bulging. Loin and back tend to be full and plump. Shoulders and breast tend to be thick.

There is a slightly thick covering of fat over the back and loin and a slightly thin fat covering over the rump and the top of the shoulders and over the inner walls of the chest and abdomen. There are moderately large deposits of fat in the breast, flanks and crotch, and around the kidneys, the latter being completely covered. All exterior fat is smooth and moderately firm. The flesh is firm, fine-textured and, in a cut surface, velvety to sight and touch, and has a small amount of marbling. Calf carcasses which are approaching beef in maturity and development will have a moderate amount of marbling. All bones are small in proportion to the size and weight of the carcass.

CHOICE

A calf carcass possessing the minimum qualifications for the Choice grade tends to be moderately blocky and compact and tends to be moderately broad in proportion to its length. It tends to be moderately thick-fleshed and has a moderately plump appearance. Rounds tend to be moderately thick and bulging. Loin and back tend to be moderately full and plump. Shoulders and breast tend to be moderately thick.

There is a moderately thin covering of fat over the loin and back and over the inner walls of the chest and abdomen and a very thin fat covering over the rump and tops of the shoulders. There are moderate deposits of fat in the breast, flanks, and crotch, and around the kidneys. The flesh tends to be moderately firm and fine-textured, and, in a cut surface, may be slightly moist to sight and touch, and has traces of marbling. Calf carcasses approaching beef in maturity and development will have a slight amount of marbling. All bones are moderately small in proportion to the size and weight of the carcass.

GOOD

A calf carcass possessing the minimum qualifications for the Good grade tends to be slightly blocky and compact and tends to be slightly broad in proportion to its length. It tends to be only slightly thick-fleshed and has a slightly plump appearance. Rounds are slightly thick but have little evidence of plumpness. Loin and back are very slightly full and plump. Shoulders and breast are slightly thick.

There is a very thin covering of fat over the loin and back and over the inner walls of the chest and abdomen. There are very thin patches of fat over the rump and top of the shoulders. There are slightly small deposits of fat in the breast, flanks and crotch, and around the kidneys. The flesh is slightly soft and, in a cut surface, is somewhat moist to sight and touch. All bones are slightly large in proportion to the size and weight of the carcass.

COMMERCIAL

A calf carcass possessing the minimum qualifications for the Commercial grade is rough and rangy and narrow in proportion to its length. It tends to be thinly fleshed and has a depressed, sunken, or hollowed-out appearance. Rounds are thin and tapering and very slightly concave. Loins and back are slightly shallow and depressed. Shoulders and breast are thin.

There are very small, thin patches of fat on the back and loin and on the inner walls of the chest and abdomen. There are very small deposits of fat in the breast, flanks and crotch, and around the kidneys, the latter being only partially covered. The flesh is moderately soft, and, in a cut surface, is slightly watery in appearance. All bones are moderately large in proportion to the size and weight of the carcass.

UTILITY

A calf carcass possessing the minimum qualifications for the Utility grade is very rough and rangy and very narrow in proportion to its length. It is very thinly fleshed and has a very depressed, sunken, or hollowed-out appearance. Rounds are very thin and tapering and are moderately concave. Loin and back are very shallow and depressed. Shoulders and breast are very narrow and thin.

The exterior surface of the carcass is practically devoid of fat covering and there is no discernible fat over the inner walls of the chest and abdomen. There are extremely small deposits of fat in the breast, flanks, and crotch, and around the kidneys. The flesh is very soft and very moist and watery. All bones are very large in proportion to the size and weight of the carcass.

CULL

A typical Cull grade calf carcass is extremely rough and rangy and extremely narrow in proportion to its length. It is extremely thinly fleshed and has an extremely depressed, sunken, or hollowed-out appearance. Rounds are extremely thin, tapering, and concave. Loins and back are extremely shallow and depressed. Shoulders and breast are extremely narrow and thin.

There is usually no visible exterior fat and the interior fat is limited to extremely small amounts in the crotch and around the kidneys. The flesh is very soft and watery. All bones are extremely large in proportion to the size and weight of the carcass.